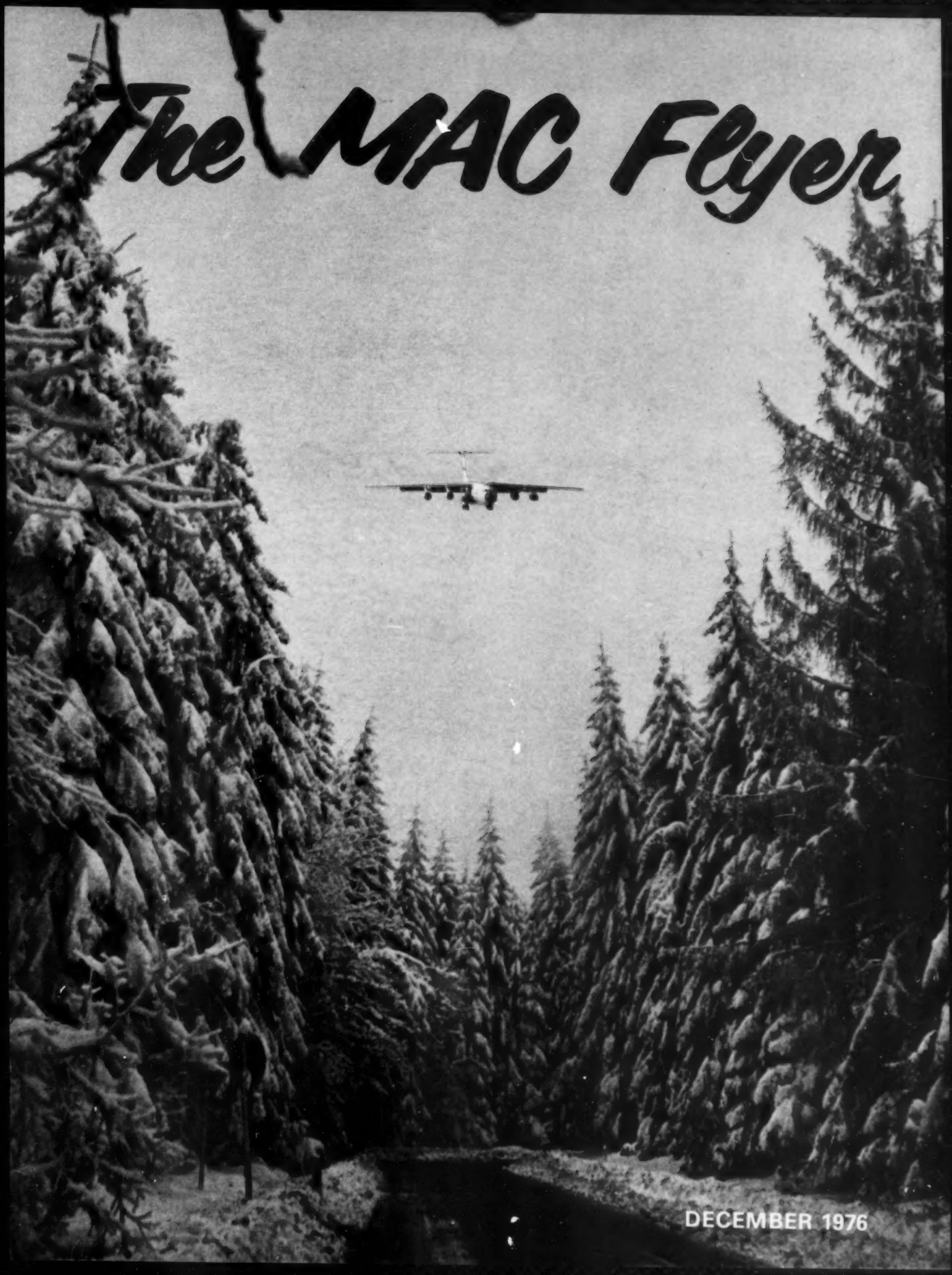
The MAC Flyer



DECEMBER 1976

MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND

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For Greater Efficiency
in MAC Air Operations

The MAC Flyer

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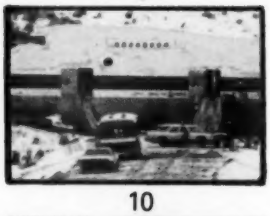

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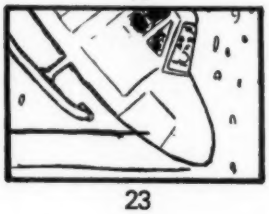

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A Christmas Message

As our nation's Bicentennial Year draws to an end, I wish to extend Yuletide greetings to the thousands of Military Airlift Command men and women throughout the world.

In a world in which strife and terrorism abound and slavery is a way of life for millions, the dual goals of peace and freedom can be attained only through strength. The resources which provide our global capability are the projection of that strength; but its source is in you—whether active duty, Reserve or Air Guard, or civilian employee—the individual member of this command. Aircraft mechanic or security policeman, loadmaster or weather observer, audio-visual specialist or rescue paramedic, administrative specialist or pilot—it is your effort and your dedication which achieve MAC's critical mission.

I recognize that strength cannot be maintained without sacrifice. I wish to express my special appreciation to those who will spend this holiday season far from their homes and loved ones. Yours is a special contribution, indeed. I hope you will remember that it is selflessness such as yours which makes it possible for all of us to enjoy the blessings of freedom.

Your efforts exemplify the true spirit of Christmas. Mrs. Carlton joins me in wishing you and yours all the joys of the season and the blessings of health and happiness throughout the New Year.

Paul K Carlton

What drives an experienced, safety-conscious pilot to take a senseless risk? This story, based on fact, may offer a clue.

Christmas in the Rockies

Jimmy looked out the window. No snow yet, he thought. Well, that's good, 'cause Dad can't fly in the snow. But not so good if it doesn't snow by tomorrow. Then I won't be able to try out the new skis under the Christmas tree.

He smiled in anticipation. It's pretty hard to wrap skis so you can't tell what they are. He chuckled a little.

"Young man, what do you find so funny?" His grandmother joined him at the window.

"Oh, nothing, Grandma." He continued looking out the window. "When do you suppose Mom and Dad will get home?"

"Okay, I'll tell you once more," his grandmother feigned disgust. "Your mother called and said they were leaving Reno as soon as it got light. We should be able to pick them up at Buckley by three o'clock."

"What's that, Grandma?" Sarah announced her presence, emerging from the hallway, still in her nightgown, rubbing her eyes.

Grandmother repeated the words in a singsong voice. "Now that both of you sleepyheads are up and about, I'll fix you some breakfast. How about some of Grandma B.'s sourdough pancakes?"

"With my favorite raspberry syrup?" Jimmy coaxed.

"Anything for my favorite grandchildren." Grandmother smiled. They are my favorite grandchildren, she thought. And she guessed that Tom was her favorite son. A dashing Air Force jet pilot. If only George had lived to

by Maj Orlen L. Brownfield
Associate Editor

see him come home from Vietnam, a real hero. But she knew that Tom's father had been justifiably proud of his son—even though he used to kid Tom about being one of those officers, he had a special way of saying "officer." Tom would retort, "Just wait till I catch you in uniform, Chief. I'll stand you at attention and . . . " So it would go.

Funny, she thought, he's been dead over five years and it still seems like yesterday. He hadn't lived to see their second son commissioned. She blinked away a tear.

•

"Okay, Betsy," Tom said. "I'll go check weather and file the flight plan. You do the preflight like a good little bird." He patted her on the rump.

"Yes, Sir, Captain," Betsy responded with mock respect. "You sure run a tight ship. And don't get fresh with the copilot!"

"Beat it!" he said. But she was already gone, strutting out toward the Cherokee 140.

Tom turned to the couple standing next to him. "And she can cook, too!"

"Betsy's a wonderful woman, all right," Gary responded.

"And a super good friend," Sally added. "Too bad you two couldn't spend Christmas with us."

"Yes, Sal," Tom sighed. "But duty calls."

"Maybe next year," Gary said. "You know, Tom, sometimes I really miss it. And sometimes I think Sally does, too."

"Oh, no you don't," Sally interrupted. "I miss my old friends but I'll keep my civilianized husband."

"Sally's right," Gary nodded. "It takes a special kind of person to hang in there. And you're doing well. Made major in the secondary, didn't you?"

"No, Gary, but I am going to Command and Staff next fall. That should put me in the thick of things."

"Sounds great." Gary extended a hand. "Look, Tom, I've got to get to work. Kiss Betsy for me, and fly safe."

Tom made an impatient gesture. "This flight is a mere trifle for the world's finest pilot."

Sally kissed Tom. "Bye, Handsome—have a safe flight."

Tom waved as they started away. "You sound just like your old man, there."

Sally blew him a kiss. "Love and apologies to Betsy," she shouted as she slammed the door of the green Mercedes.

Tom watched them drive off and then turned and started up the stairs toward the weather station.

"Don't see any problem between here and Salt Lake," the forecaster surmised. "There's a cold air mass about a hundred miles north of your course. No sig weather but it might get a little bumpy at the lower levels."

"Looks like another MAC on-time departure," Tom said aloud.

"Huh?" the civilian forecaster frowned.

"Oh, nothing," Tom answered, jotting down the altimeter settings and winds. "Thanks—and see you next year."

Tom went downstairs and filed the flight plan—VFR to Buckley. Going home, he'd just follow old Interstate 80/US 40, Tom thought. Seventy-five hundred should be a good altitude. Just three hours to Salt Lake with a little tailwind, and less than three more hours to home and a warm fire.

He walked out the swinging doors and met Betsy.

"Where's Gary and Sally?" Betsy looked beyond Tom.

"They had to go—Gary had to get to work. Good grief, what

happened to you?" Tom detected a smell of gasoline.

"I may be a good copilot," Sally shrugged, "but I'm not so good in the engineering department. When I possumed the tanks, I got gasoline all over my arm."

"Possumed?" Tom laughed. "You mean pogoed."

"Whatever."

The Lycoming burst into life and Tom throttled back to 1,000 rpm. "Nice and smooth," Tom said and pulled out the cabin heat knob.

"Nice and warm," Betsy responded.

Tom held the mike to his lips. "Reno Tower, Cherokee three-two-one Zulu is ready to depart. We're VFR to Buckley."

"Roger, twenty-one Zulu," the voice crackled. "Active is one six, winds calm."

Tom pulled the runup check and taxied onto the runway.

"We're cleared to go," he said to Betsy. "You want to make this one?"

"For sure," Betsy beamed and grabbed the throttle and yoke.

The prop gnawed hungrily at the cold morning air and Betsy pulled back on the wheel as the airspeed passed 65 mph. "That's exhilarating," she shouted over the engine's roar.

"Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth . . . " Tom started the litany of a love known only by aviators.

•

"Grandma," began Sarah, standing with arms akimbo, "when are Momma and Daddy coming home?"

"Sarah, the worrier," Grandmother B. comforted. "Tom and Betsy won't be home until just before dinner. Why, right now they're probably near Salt Lake City."

"Well, they'd better get here before Santa," Sarah frowned.

Jimmy shot a knowing glance at his grandmother. He was ten years old now and not too sure about this Santa Claus bit. "No sweat, Sarah. Santa doesn't come until midnight."

•

"Man, I can't believe our ground speed." Tom was fiddling with his computer. "We must be getting a 50-knot tailwind. We're about a half hour ahead of flight plan."

"Is that the reason it's so bumpy?"

"Roger that." Tom studied his computer. "If these tailwinds hold, we'll make it with gasoline to burn." Tom laid the computer on the dash and studied various charts. "A few degrees to the right and we'll head for good old Strawberry Pass. Better get up to 9,500 feet though." Tom rolled the Cherokee into a gentle right bank, pushed the throttle in, and began the climb.

"There's Strawberry Pass," Tom said pointing out over the dash. The turbulence was worse now. Climbing through 9,000 feet, Tom noticed a 15- to 20-knot fluctuation in airspeed.

"I don't like this at all," the left-seater said. "We're level at 9,500 and this airspeed is just bouncing off the scale. I think we'd better find safe harbor somewhere." Tom eased the Piper into a left bank.

"Oh, come on, honey." Betsy looked perplexed. "Can't we get through? Maybe it's smoother on the other side of the pass."

"Could be," Tom allowed, "but we'll head for Salt Lake Muni and get a check."

"Darn," Betsy complained. I still haven't got your Mom's Christmas present."

A little later Tom was on the telephone listening to Salt Lake Metro.

"No reports, but we figure with the unstable air mass coming from the north, moderate—maybe even severe—turbulence."

"Will it get any better?"

"No, and it might last for a couple days," the voice came through the earpiece.

"Yuk—well, thanks a lot, anyway," Tom said cheerlessly as he hung up the receiver.

"Betsy, my dear, it looks bad," He put his arm around her waist.

"Tom," Betsy's brow fur-

rowed, "I want to go home. The kids will be heartbroken—*I'll* be heartbroken. You're the world's greatest pilot. Where's all this macho you display at the club bar?"

"C'mon, Betsy, don't start in."

They were interrupted. "You the fella with the Cherokee tryin' to get back to Denver?" Tom smiled—could it be a civilian SOF?

"Sure am," he responded.

"Well, Eino just came through Strawberry in his Citabria. Maybe he can tell you what it's like."

Betsy's eyes brightened. She grabbed Tom's sleeve and the three headed for the red and white Champ.

As the prop unwound, a middle-aged, balding pilot emerged, complete with Levis and cowboy boots.

"One hell of a ride, I'll tell you!" he drawled. Sometimes I had to get down to a hunnerd feet to get out of the shear." He shook his head. "Takes a *real* pilot to get through that stuff."

As the two old gents walked away, Betsy turned to Tom. "Well, *he* got through. And, really, I don't want to spend the next two days touring Salt Lake City. My vote is to go!"

"Betsy—that's asinine. We'll end up plastered on the side of some mountain."

"Well, I'll tell you what. You can stay here—but I'm going to International and catch the first jet to Denver. I'm not going to miss Christmas with my kids because you're afraid of a little turbulence!" Betsy was shouting now. The two older aviators had turned to watch the fireworks.

"Damn it, lady," Tom spoke deliberately, trying to control his temper, "you've lost your mind. But I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll give it a try—that's all, a try. And if it's rough, I turn around. Good enough?"

"Good enough!"

•

"Grandma, it's starting to snow," exclaimed Jimmy as he turned from the window and eyed those wrapped skis under the tree. "Will Dad be able to make it in? I thought you said they'd be here by three o'clock? It's getting dark now. Where are they?"

"Don't worry about your father—he's the best pilot in the Air Force." Grandmother's voice was less confident than her words.

•

The sleeping teletype at Rescue Coordination Center began to stir. The rhythmic tapping pulled the sergeant away from the coffeepot and a war story the captain was telling.

With his audience gone, the captain returned to his desk. "Gotta clean up this mess," he said.

Ring!

"Rescue Coordination Center, Captain Brock."

"Captain Brock, this is Mr. Taylor, Denver Center. Braniff flight 99 picked up an ELT on departure from Denver. His destination was Seattle. So it's probably emanating from an area northwest of Denver."

"Okay, copied all," the captain acknowledged, and then placed the receiver in the cradle.

"Hey, Captain," the sergeant ripped the message from the teletype. "We've got an overdue at Buckley from Salt Lake. It's a Cherokee with two souls on board, and the weather is getting awfully bad."

"Let's have a look." He took the message and began to study it. "Oh, no!" he whispered.

The senior coordinator joined the captain. "What's the matter, Ed?"

"It's Tom—my brother Tom."

The major studied the message. "Cherokee 321Z/VFR/Salt Lake/Buckley/Pilot Thomas N. Brock."

•

"Hello?"

"Hello, Mom, it's Eddie."

"Oh, son, so nice of you to call—Christmas and all. I'm sorry but Tom and Betsy haven't returned from Reno yet."

"I know, Mom—I know . . . "

"Super Troop"

by Capt Milton G. Schellhase
HQ Western Air Force Reserve Region
McClellan AFB, California

Pressure on the men who repair airplanes is sometimes just as intense as on those who fly them. And there are times that such pressure can be tragic.

I remember the day John arrived at good ol' Murphy Air Patch. It was kind of hot and humid and ten minutes after you were outside you felt soggy. The reason I remember was that he looked crisp like he had just stepped out of the house, and he looked like that all day long. I guess I'm sort of a "Pigpen" character. I can walk by an aircraft at a distance of 20 yards and end up with hydraulic fluid on one sleeve, grease on the other, and engine soot on my back. So when I saw him, right away I didn't like him. But that changed with time.

I also remember the day John first tangled with our supervisor, TSgt. Alberts. By then I had gotten used to the fact that he looked better than I did, and he had become a friend. The hassle came up over some in-tank work; John was supposed to go inside the fuel tank and "depuddle" it to get the area ready for a repair. Up to that time he had been assigned outside work; otherwise the battle would have started earlier. It went something like this:

"Hey, John, I want you to go inside the number three cell and depuddle it today. Jorgenson was going to do it but he got sick yesterday after working on 473."

"Sure, Sarge. Who's going to work the outside and where do I get the respirator and the rest of the stuff?"

"Well, you can get the over-

alls and booties over there in the cabinet, but we don't have any respirators. They're on order, but I'll be damned if I know when we'll get them. And as for the guy outside . . . well, there isn't anyone available, so don't work too long up there without taking a break."

"Sarge, I'm not going in that tank with no one outside. I'll space out in 15 minutes on those JP-4 fumes."

"You don't get the picture. First of all, this isn't even our hangar. Second, I put that stuff on order—what the hell else can I do? And third, when you've got aircraft that are broken, the old man isn't interested in a song and dance about 'I haven't got the equipment.' Look, John, I know that T. O. as well as you do, but I'm up against the wall."

"I'm sorry, I'm not going to do it . . . wall or not."

"Are you telling me, Airman Bergman, that if I give you an order, you aren't going to obey it?"

"I want to see the Chief, Sergeant Albert."

"He'll tell you the same thing. Go ahead."

And so John saw the maintenance superintendent and the Chief told him how the wing needed the aircraft and so on. And John said okay, he wouldn't fight it, and he went back to work. And nothing happened that day or for a couple of months after. Everybody, that is all four of us in the shop, used the same method. We just wouldn't stay longer than about 10 or 15 minutes in the tank.

Looking back, I suppose it was inevitable. But it was strange how it came up. First John and I tried to go on leave at the same time. Alberts said "no way." So we flipped a coin, and I won. I didn't realize until later just how lucky I was.

About that time it started getting cold at night, which seemed to give birth to a group of fuel leaks. Aircraft were dumping fuel all over the hangar. As fast as we would get one fixed, another would start. The place had been a zoo for the last couple of weeks, so I was thankful that I got to go on leave at all. Sunday, with a big sigh of relief, I signed out and boogied on down the road.

It was nearly a week later when the call came from the squadron. Super Troop, as we sometimes called John, had died doing some in-tank work. He had just passed out in the tank, and nobody had found him for about three hours. The crew chief had been there earlier but had left to go work on the flight line. And because of the workload, fuel cell had only one guy on per shift.

I don't suppose I could have felt any worse. Maybe if you were an owl sitting up in the top of the hangar, you could have seen it coming. But being there every day, the operation seem-pretty normal; and besides, we *had* to keep 'em flying.

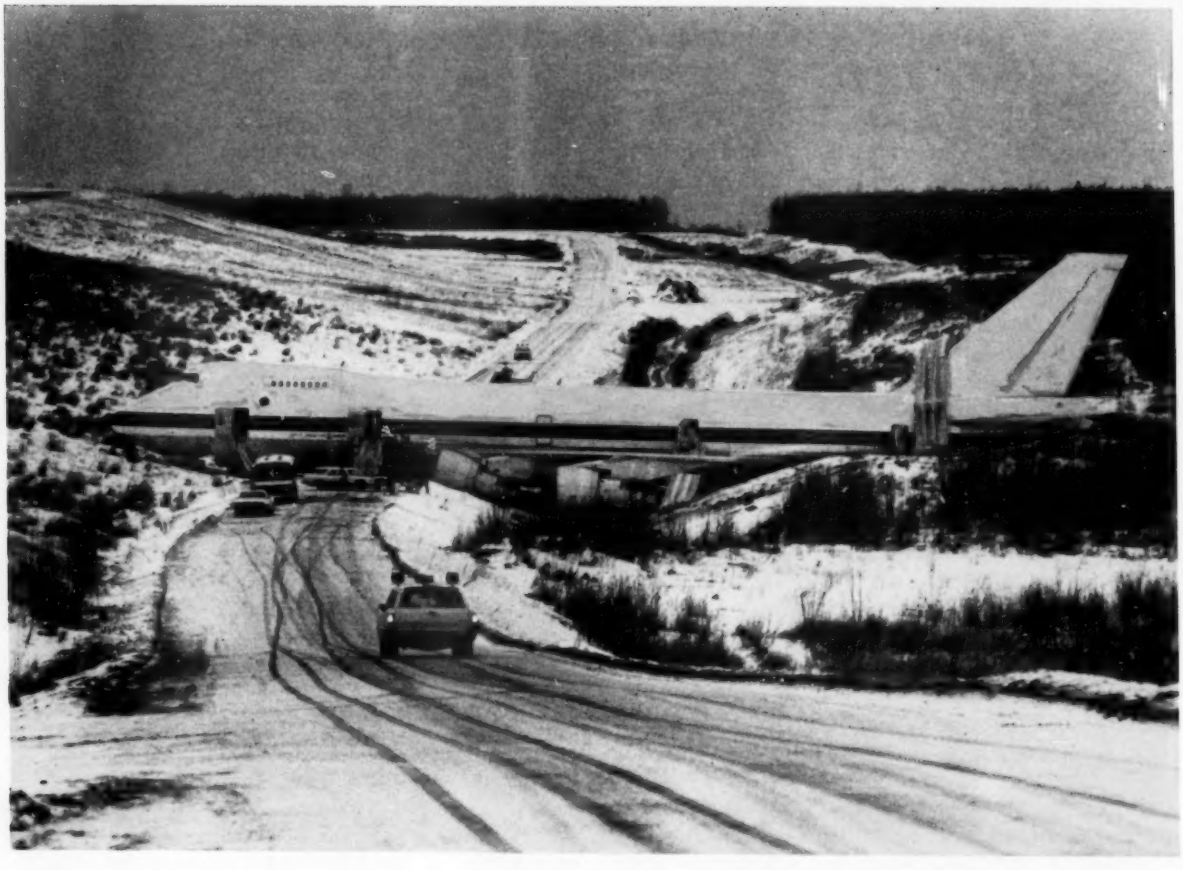
With a little Monday morning quarterbacking, it finally became clear to everyone how screwed up our operation was. Right after that, the chief of maintenance got on the phone to supply and a week or so later we got the respirators and a bunch of other stuff that we needed but never had. The hell of it is, nobody made enough noise *before* John was killed; we were too busy just trying to do the job.

No matter how much I talk, John isn't coming back. So I guess I'm telling you this 'cause maybe you've got a friend like John, or maybe you're fond of living yourself. It's too late for John; but for the rest of us, there's still time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Captain Schellhase entered the Air Force in 1966 from Seattle, Washington. Following OTS and aircraft maintenance officers school, he was assigned to the 55 WRS, McClellan AFB, California. Later assignments included Andersen AFB, Guam, Ubon RTAFB, Thailand, and Mather AFB, California. Captain Schellhase is a previous contributor to THE MAC FLYER and other safety magazines. He writes safety articles, he says, so that "people won't have to relive the same mistakes." Captain Schellhase left active duty in 1974 and is now a Reserve supplement officer with the Western Air Reserve Region, McClellan AFB, California.

Cold Weather Clues:
Super Slide



About a year ago, a foreign air carrier's jumbo made an unscheduled departure from the runway boundaries at Anchorage International. When all was said and done, only two people had received serious injuries but the Boeing Beast wasn't so lucky.

The scenario leading up to the cameraman's snapping of the photo might give a feeling of déjà vu—you've been there before. But the uniqueness of having surface ice when the temp is a warm 40° F or having the wind blow your 600,000-pound vehicle around like a paper model

is bound to prove interesting. It might even change your attitude about taxiing around on icy surfaces.

Though it was late afternoon, it was totally dark; December does that to Alaska. A light rain had been falling for about an hour as the 747 taxied to the active. Though the air temperature was reported at 40° F, the surface temperature was well below freezing (not unusual for Anchorage, meteorologists say) and winds were reported 125 degrees at 15, gusting to 32 knots. The captain felt that the braking action was good on taxi-out, but the first officer said later that the jumbo tended to slide on the taxiway.

But no problem; the captain soon had the aircraft guided to the runway centerline and advanced the power for takeoff. As the jumbo started to roll, the captain heard a loud noise coming from his left; suspecting a compressor stall, he aborted the takeoff. As the crew taxied the bird back to the terminal, the pilot checked number two by advancing the throttle. Nothing unusual was noticed. But the decision had been made and, back at the terminal, maintenance personnel checked the two port engines.

The captain remained in the cockpit while the checks were accomplished and additional fuel was onloaded. While he sat monitoring company and tower frequencies, an urgent telex from his head office came through: the aircraft would not be permitted to land at destination airport after 2300 local time because of the curfew. He must depart Anchorage before 2100 hours or spend the night. The captain decided to taxi out and wait at the end of the taxiway for favorable winds.

About a half hour before the 747 taxied out, a sister ship departed Anchorage and reported on company freq that braking action on taxiout was "nil." State airport personnel checked the runway for braking action, but the taxiways were not checked.

On taxiout the pilot of the 747 was told that the winds were 140/25 knots and further advised to use caution because the taxiway was "extremely slick."

The captain stated that he had no difficulty taxiing, but shortly after the advisory the aircraft began to slide to the right. Using nosewheel steering and brakes, the pilot got the big bird back on an even keel, and slowed his taxi speed to five knots on the INS. The jumbo began to slide again, the nose swung left about ten to 15 degrees, and the captain applied full brakes. As the slide continued he applied a small amount of reverse on all four engines and the aircraft stopped. He surmised that the gear was still on the paved surface and ordered engine shutdown. Done. And the captain ordered a tow.

But before this could be done, the aircraft canted to the right and slowly turned to the left, about 70 degrees off the taxiway heading. The 747 slid backwards, over and down an embankment, and came to rest 90 degrees to the runway.

The NTSB concluded that the accident resulted from a combination of (1) high crosswinds and slippery taxiway, (2) the failure of airport management to provide a safe surface on which to operate, and (3) *the captain's motivation and determination to continue the flight according to schedule regardless of the hazardous taxi conditions. (Italics ours—Ed.)*

A combination of circumstances—remove any one of the three factors and there would have been no accident to report. Again the final contributors to the scenario were the flight crew, as always the last defense against accidents.

When operating in cold weather it might be appropriate to juggle that old cliche—to something like, "If it doesn't feel good—don't do it."

Adapted from
National Transportation Safety Board
Report Number NTSB-AAR-76-12

Major David L. Short

GOOD SHOW

Maj David L. Short, 437 MAW, was administering a C-141 evaluation flight in the Charleston AFB local area. The flight proceeded normally until shortly after touchdown on a no-flap, full-stop landing. As the examinee positioned the throttles to reverse idle, acrid smoke began rising from the center console. Initially suspecting an electrical fire, Major Short quickly notified the tower of the emergency and requested fire equipment. Meanwhile, the pilot in the left seat began braking but encountered directional control difficulties. The Starlifter swerved quickly toward the left side of the runway—and directly toward a group of workers near the runway's edge. Nosewheel steering and differential braking had no effect, and a tragedy seemed imminent.

At this point, Major Short's quick thinking and thorough knowledge of aircraft systems paid off. Although no warning lights had yet illuminated, he recognized the symptoms of number two hydraulic system failure, notified the pilot, and selected emergency brakes. With differential braking now available, the crew brought their runaway Starlifter back under control. They stopped on the runway, shut down the engines with the fire handles, and evacuated.

Investigation showed that a hydraulic valve had failed, causing the loss of the number two system; hydraulic fluid spraying into the underdeck area had created the smoke. Major Short's correct analysis of and rapid response to the situation had kept the aircraft from leaving the runway and very probably prevented serious or fatal injury to contractor personnel. THE MAC FLYER is proud to award Major Short a well-deserved "Good Show."

An inoperative radar, a revised weather forecast, a communications breakdown — and a violent end to a seemingly routine flight.

Fire and Rain

It's going to be one of those long nights—a 2100 alert for a midnight go. And almost eight hours en route will put the crew in bed about the time that their wives and children are finishing breakfast. They complain about the scheduling—must be a full moon again; a full moon brings out the worst in scheduling wizards.

Meanwhile, out on the ramp, a graceful Starlifter hiding in the evening shadows is being prepared for the flight. The three-striper reads the 781. "APN-59 is extremely weak and unusable. Could get no returns at FL 370 in either fan or pencil beam." But it seems to be working fine now. He signs it off: "Ops check okay. Received targets 100 nm away." That'll do it.

He doesn't know that the radar has been written up eight times in the last month.

It's a quarter to eleven now, and the crew is standing in front of the weather counter.

"Your destination weather looks okay," the forecaster might be saying. "Three eighths cumulus at twenty-five hundred and four eighths stratocu at four thousand, wind is out of the north at ten knots . . ." (yawn).

"Jim, you take this leg," the captain directs his words at one of the lieutenants on the crew. "Sam can take the short one. We'll get you youngsters some good experience on the HF's and European flying."

"Yes, Sir. Any word on the aircraft?"

"Sergeant Brown says maintenance just finished up on the radar."

"Good. Let's hit it. Maybe we can make it off early. I had to stay at the office until 4:30 this afternoon."

"Hey, Cap, that's in violation of 55-1!"

"Right, sonny; you explain that to my boss."

Everybody laughs.

But they do get off early and all is going well. But, as luck (luck?) would have it, the APN-59

radar quits working on climbout. So, in darkness, the crew asks for and receives assistance in circumnavigating some CB's. Center and a commercial airliner provide some vectors for the 141 and soon they're in the clear and level at FL 330. (Ho hum.)

About two hours after takeoff, Host Nation Met Office issues a SIGMET: "Moderate to occasional severe clear air turbulence between FL 240 and 400 . . . " This is massaged by USAF types and downgraded to "moderate" for MAC aircraft. No matter, the Starlifter will not receive the information.

The time now is takeoff plus four hours and 30 minutes. The crew contacts the airways station and after a normal position report, asks for the destination weather.

The HF station reads the forecast to MAC. "Terminal forecast as follows: Wind 010/10, visibility five plus, three-eighths at 3000, five-eighths at 4,000 . . . intermittently 030/12 gusting 22, five miles in *thunderstorms,* two-eighths at 2,000, five-eighths at 2,500."

"Acknowledged." (Hmmm. Thunderstorms?)

The time now is takeoff plus six hours and 30 minutes. Only an hour to go. MAC calls the HF facility—need a phone patch with Destination Metro—find out what the weather is really like. Sorry. Scheduled autovon maintenance makes that impossible.

What about Deutschland Metro? Can do.

After the general weather report and forecast, MAC asks Deutschland about the destination forecast.

"I have a radar report out of Destination. We're in the hazard area of four-eighths of thunderstorms and maximum tops at this time running 26,000 feet."

Thunderstorms. No airborne radar. The crew begins to feel a bit uneasy. "Let's try another phone patch to Destination Metro," a crew member is saying.

Sorry, again. HF station tells the crew that autovon is still down for maintenance. Instead MAC is patched to Deutschland maintenance and transmits: ". . . inbound to Destination at this time. Our radar failed on departure . . . numerous cell activity along route of flight . . . have to have radar maintenance before continuing on to Destination II."

So close! Only 15 minutes to go. The crew in the cockpit starts the cleanup, a copilot logs "1" full stop at Destination in the 781, and the young lieutenant in the left seat pulls the throttles back and thumbs the autopilot pitch wheel.

The navigator asks for the 781. He writes: "APN-59 radar inop. No mag current and fluctuating mixer current. No returns." The aircraft is at 15,000 now. Thirty miles from destination.

"Radar, MAC is at flight level 150."

"Roger," the ground agency responds, "we have very poor radar performance. A lot of clutter; there could be late warning of traffic from all directions."

"MAC Starlifter, roger. We'll keep our eyes open . . . and . . . MAC is requesting radar vectors around any weather buildups. We are nonradar-equipped at this time."

"Roger . . . unfortunately there's weather between you and Destination. There's more weather on the radar tube at the moment and our main radar is unserviceable . . . our remote radar is processed against weather so it's very difficult for us to provide the service."

" . . . understood. Are there any other aircraft . . . who could possibly help us?"

"Negative . . . ," Radar responds. And then, " . . . we are getting the radar back now. Just wait one, please."

"Roger, we're here."

"Yes, it's pretty solid cover between you and Destination. There's quite a bit of rain. It doesn't look too heavy to me but it could be deceptive. There's no way I can get you round it."

"MAC understands . . . requesting a left turn . . . to avoid a cell activity here."

"Okay, you're clear left turn . . . and . . . to commence descent now to flight level five zero."

"MAC, roger . . . "

Radar calls again, "MAC, this left turn is putting you into a little area where there is no weather, but you're certainly going to run into it again . . . I can't see any way through it at all."

"Roger," the pilot replies. " . . . you're painting thunderstorm buildups?"

" . . . it would seem in the main just general rain, although there could be a bit of activity in it."

" . . . MAC is attempting to maintain VMC and to pick our way through . . . if we maintain this heading for a couple more minutes we may be able to turn . . . toward Destination direct and thus maintain visual conditions with ground contact."

"Okay . . . I'll leave you to your own navigation . . . advise . . . when you turn."

"Roger, Radar. MAC is out of flight level 120 right now, for five zero."

Seven hours and 29 minutes after takeoff, the MAC aircraft turns back toward Destination and requests a PAR to runway XX.

"PAR to XX, roger," Radar responds. "And MAC, squawk 6610 . . ."

No response. No transponder change. Finally, no target.

The upper half of the T-tail broke away in flight.

The aircraft wreckage was scattered over a five-mile long by one-mile wide area. All four engines, the right wing, and the horizontal stabilizer and upper half of the vertical stabilizer broke away from the aircraft in flight and were found at varying distances from the main wreckage.

There was no evidence of lightning strike or materiel failure due to fatigue. The pilot flew his aircraft too close to (perhaps into) a thunderstorm. There were no survivors.

MACSUP 1 to AFR 60-16 reads in part:

"2-4e. (Added) MAC aircraft will not be operated into known or forecast weather conditions . . . which will exceed aircraft limitations . . . and in situations listed . . . :

"(2) Aircraft will not be operated into areas of known or forecast thunderstorms without an operational airborne radar capable of detecting such thunderstorm activity unless the flight can be conducted through the area visually . . .

"(3) In flight, every effort will be made to avoid thunderstorms using the following criteria . . . :

"Aircraft at or above FL 230—20 nm

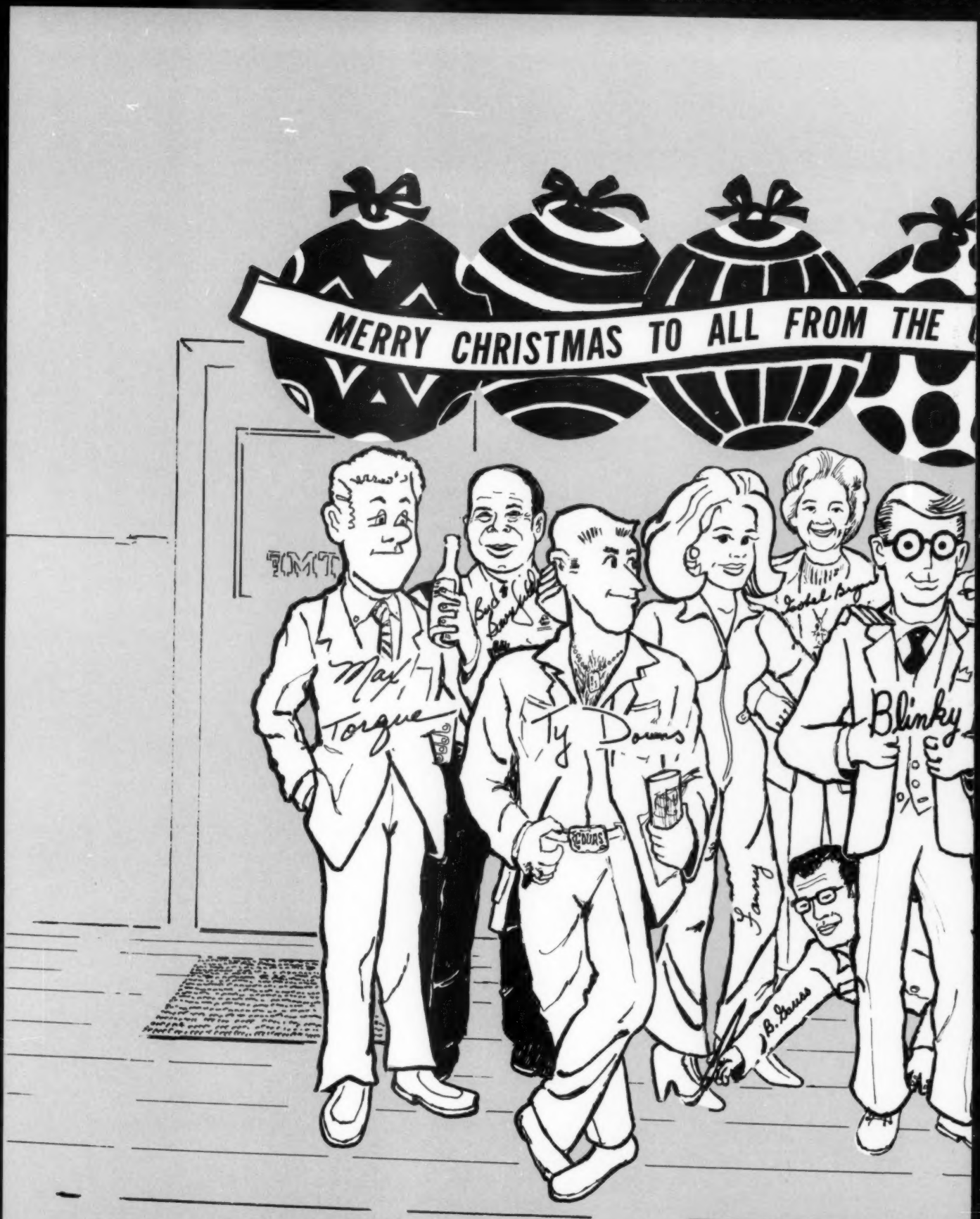
"Aircraft below FL 230—(0°C or less)—10 nm

"Aircraft below FL 230—(above 0°C)—5 nm

" . . . if unable, *holding* until able to proceed or *diversion to a suitable alternate* should be considered.

"(4) If airborne radar fails while operating in areas of known . . . thunderstorms . . . the air traffic controlling agency will be so advised and alternate routing and/or radar vectoring service will be requested."

Some MAC aviators tend to discount these words as "for the other guy" or "only a guide." The fact is that the words in the MACSUP are based on years and years of experience and millions of flying hours—and their purpose is to protect *you, your passengers, and your aircraft.*


MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL FROM THE
Max Torque
Ty Downs
Blinky
B. Bruce

CREW OF THE MAC FLYER
MacZaminer
COFFEE
C.R. Terror
Long Suffering San
Tassels
24

Is Danny O'Keefe Qualified . . . Yet?

Many questions are asked in the aftermath of an accident. Some of them should have been asked before.

Riinngg!

The final long ring just prior to impact cut the stillness as I drew my knees up under my chin and braced myself against the bulkhead waiting for the final moment. I closed my eyes so tightly that they hurt; and even though I knew it might be my final moments, I could not open them for one final look at the world around me . . .

Riinngg!

Slowly the reality started to creep back into my mind as I realized that the impending crash was only a nightmare—the kind that leaves you with a cold sweat and an icy feeling at the base of the spine. I must have fallen asleep while studying the Dash One . . . funny, it always does that to me . . .

Riinngg!

The persistent ringing was now part of my conscious mind. I realized it was the phone. In the darkness, the jangling took on an ominous tone. It was too late for social callers.

Honorable Mention, 1976 MAC Flying Safety Writing Contest

by Capt Richard L. Cecil
MAC, Operational Requirements

Must be something wrong at the folks', or at the squadron, or . . .

"Hello—"

Before I could finish I recognized the voice of my ops officer, Colonel Ralph. "Jim, get down here right away," he rasped. "We've got a situation that could need your attention." Click . . .

"Yes, Sir," I found myself saying to the dial tone.

In a matter of minutes I was dressed and behind the wheel. My mind was conjuring up all sorts of situations that might have prompted the call. An ORI? No, he would have said. Airborne emergency? Maybe—but usually we try to handle those from quarters, if possible. If it were a recall or a TDY there would be some indication and a clothing requirement . . .

My mind kept wandering and turning over possibilities during the half-hour drive to the squadron. I found myself in front of the unit, with no real recollection of the drive. As I surveyed the parking lot, I saw the commander's, ops officer's, and several other cars I recognized, plus a staff car. Inside, I was met by Lieutenant Roberts, one of the newer copilots. He was a hard-charging young pilot, so much so that we called him "Rapid Robert." But now he was pale and nervous and his eyes were bloodshot. "Have you heard?" he asked.

"No. What's wrong?"

"The alert crew is missing. They can't find them . . . and I'm the alert copilot and—"

"Hey, wait a minute. Slow down." I finally managed to stop him. "What are you talking about? Who can't find the alert crew?" Then I realized that he was in a state of shock and looked like he wanted to be anywhere but here, but didn't know where to go.

"The alert crew," he said more deliberately, "they were scrambled about an hour ago, and now they can't find them. I was the copilot, but it was a medevac mission to Pottsville, and since neither the AC or I had been there at night, they put Captain Ames, your standardization copilot, on the flight . . . I wanted to go but they made me replace Ames on the standby alert crew. God, I can't believe this is happening!"

"Whoa, take it easy, Lieutenant. Do they know if something is wrong? Are there any reports or—"

"I don't know for sure; the commander hasn't said. But he's in there now with the chaplain and wing commander."

"Well, I'd better go in and see what's going on. You look like you could use some rest. I'll call you if we need you." I walked into the operations section.

I could see the chaplain, the ops officer, the commander, and the wing commander, all listening on the telephone, their faces pale and drawn. The chaplain slowly lowered the phone back on the cradle and shook his head. Whatever the news, it hadn't been good. I started to speak but, in my stomach, I could feel the knot getting tighter. The commander and wing commander looked at each other, then went into the commander's office, followed by the chaplain. The ops officer finally turned and motioned me into his office. For some reason, the circles under his eyes were deeper and his gray hair seemed grayer than usual. I followed him into the office. "That was the FAA. They think our medevac mission crashed into the hill just south of Pottsville!"

I cleared my throat. "Are there any witnesses?"

"The tower cleared the aircraft for a circling approach, then lost sight of them because of some low clouds. There's an unconfirmed report of an explosion in that vicinity."

I suddenly realized that we were talking about the loss of an aircraft and a crew . . . "Who was the crew, Sir?"

"It was the standardization crew, Jim—your crew!"

"Mine,but how? Who was the AC? We were only backup this weekend. I don't understand."

"The AC was Danny . . . Danny O'Keefe. We put him on with your crew since he hasn't landed at some of the fields around here, and we felt it would help him gain confidence while also backing him up with a good crew."

His words trailed off as he turned and just stared out of the black window toward the flight line. As I stood there watching him study the dark reflection, my thoughts turned to the events of the preceding weeks. The events that led us to this moment.

Danny had come to the outfit about six months ago from another command. He had a lot of flying time in several different kinds of aircraft. Yet, in none of these had he ever been qualified as an aircraft commander. His flying records did not follow him, so there was no indication of why he had never been upgraded. Since he had the hours for AC and we were hurting for experienced pilots, he was recommended for immediate upgrade to AC. A lack of capability at the training wing found our unit tasked to provide in-unit training and upgrade qualification. Since Danny was a high-time captain, the unit was instructed to enter him into training immediately. Naturally, this caused a great deal of concern among the lieutenants and young captains who were trying to get valuable upgrade training and flying time.

Things did not go well even from the first for Danny. He did not fly for several weeks because of leave, DNIF, and bad weather. However, Danny didn't seem to mind and didn't push to get on the schedule. About two months after he was assigned, his training finally started in earnest. A week of concentrated training brought several aborts and long days and the few instructors who had flown with Danny noted that he was a bit hesitant to "take charge." We figured it was the new surroundings, the move, and the settling-in process.

The training officer was first to note that Danny had accomplished the normal number of training events to date within the syllabus, but rarely satisfactorily. I first became aware of the problem during a Certification Board meeting. The training officer mentioned it, couching his concern in vague references to training time, aborts, etc. The commander suggested we monitor the training program more closely, concentrate on Danny O'Keefe, and try to reduce the number of instructors working with him.

The bar talk after work started to become more heated because the younger pilots felt they were being held back until Danny was upgraded and they became more vocal. I tried to stay out of the situation because I had to give Danny his final evaluation and I wanted to be as objective as possible.

However, objectivity was not on everyone's mind. Danny later received a severe setback from a majcom weenie, which then prompted the headquarters to establish monitoring criteria for the squadron to keep track of Danny's progress. Now the entire unit was involved in the Danny O'Keefe case. It no longer was a situation of trying to provide quality training for an individual. It was an ultimatum: get Danny O'Keefe qualified—*now*!

Aborts, mechanical difficulties, bad weather in the training area and priority missions dogged the unit for the next several weeks and Danny's training took a back seat to the real world of mission priorities. The normal upgrade period was exceeded and headquarters granted an extension. We now had a definite date for qualification . . . the battle lines were drawn, the objectives established, the plan set in motion; Danny would be qualified by the end of the extension period or else he would face a possible FEB. His qualification became one of the unit's main objectives. Besides, if we couldn't train a high-time pilot, it would be a poor reflection on our program. As if by magic, I was scheduled to give Danny his AC qualification evaluation two days prior to the end of the extension per-

iod. Danny's check ride was nothing more nor less than every other initial AC's, and he performed in a satisfactory manner. I can remember being asked if Danny might have had a good day on that particular ride. All I could say was that he was safe in my judgment, performing as required. The words I used to describe the ride on his Form 4 were the standard "Safe conduct of the aircraft and crew."

My knees slowly buckled under me and I sank into the leather chair beside the ops officer's desk. My mind repeated the word "Safe," over and over and over . . .

My thoughts were interrupted by the ops officer. "Was this Danny's first or second alert?"

"Second, I think."

"His first scramble though?"

"Right."

That's right; we had qualified him the last day of the extension and lost no time putting him on alert. Someone suggested that Danny initially fly with the standardization crew, my crew. A discussion on levels of qualification ensued, since the signed evaluation form said nothing about Danny's being qualified to fly only with a certain crew. It was voiced that the term "qualified" meant just that, that Danny was capable of performing every part of the mission, regardless of circumstances. That discussion obviously led to a different decision, because the check ride was complete—Danny was "qualified," but was put on alert with *my crew!*

As I sat there, trying to get unwrapped from the events that led us here, thoughts of what would happen next started creeping into my mind. There would be the trauma, heartbreak and grief associated with the notification process. Intermixed with this would be the preliminary investigation by the accident board, and then the deep, constant probing of all aspects of the accident. It would be at this stage that questions would be raised as to why changes in the crew were made at the last minute; what prompted the unit to take that course of action; what influence does a crew, highly qualified as a standardization crew, have on an aircraft commander; and what influence should they have. Questions about the relationship of the safety office and the training/standardization process would be examined, as would be the integrity of all the personnel involved in the pilot qualification process . . . What was *my* role in the process? Was I objective in my dealings with both the instructors, the student, and the commander? Did I compromise my integrity for the sake of the paper-mill and the desires of those above me? What role did Danny's background have in this? Did *he* consider himself qualified? Or was he perhaps a victim of the system?

Many of these questions would never be answered, because the answers were scattered across a mountainside, out there . . . somewhere. Icy fingers of uncertainty crawled down my spine again, as I slowly muttered a prayer that the investigation would substantiate the unit's position that Danny O'Keefe was qualified.

My thoughts were jarred back to reality by the ringing of the phone. It rang twice—three times. Finally, the ops officer slowly picked up the receiver, listened, jotted down a few notes, then laid the receiver on the desk. "That was the Headquarters Command Post; the investigation team will be arriving tomorrow morning. They want us all to be available for questioning. They also want the list of crewmembers' names as soon as the families are notified."

He shook his head ironically. "They also had a special interest briefing item. They wanted to know if we'd gotten Danny O'Keefe qualified yet !"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Captain Cecil, second place winner in last year's contest, received his commission in 1967 through AFROTC at the University of Arkansas. After pilot training, he flew C-123's at DaNang AB, followed by an assignment to HC-130's at Hickam. While flying with the 76 ARRS, Captain Cecil served as squadron training officer and flight examiner and accumulated over 2,000 hours in the HC-130. He is currently assigned to Operational Requirements DCS/Plans at Scott AFB.

How About Saving a Life?

You can, you know, even if you're not a Rescue type or an aeromedical evacuator. How? By sending in a winning entry in the MAC Flying Safety Writing Contest.

Nearly everybody associated with the flying business has one or two gems of wisdom about staying alive while aviating. Why not share yours with the world? It just might make the difference between retirement pay and survivor's benefits for somebody, somewhere. Your creation doesn't have to be flawless; just give it your best shot. The content is what counts, and we've got a full-time staff of editors to straighten out the spelling and put the commas where they belong. Anything with a flying safety message is acceptable: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, philosophy, technical articles—the choice is yours.

Naturally there are a few guidelines to follow. They are:

1. Anybody can enter. You don't have to be an aviator; maintenance and support folks have plenty of good ideas too. To win one of the official prizes (desk set or wall plaque), you have to be assigned to MAC, active or reserve military or a DAF civilian. But whoever you are—if your story's a winner, we'll print it.

2. Try to keep your original, unpublished entry between 1,000 and 3,000 words (that works out to between six and 14 typed, double-spaced pages). Poetry, of course, won't run quite so long.

3. Enter as many stories as you like, but type each of them in two copies on 8 by 10 1/2 inch paper with no identification except the title. Then to each copy attach a cover sheet with the story title, your name and address (military, if you have one), and a brief autobiography.

4. Mail your story to:

MAC Flying Safety Writing Contest
MAC/IGFE
Scott AFB IL 62225

5. DO IT NOW!

Well, you don't have to leap out of your chair this instant and ask the boss for the rest of the day off. But your story must be postmarked no later than 31 March 1977 and must be received at THE MAC FLYER no later than 8 April 1977. So the next time things get really slow on the mid shift or in the alert quarters, start jotting down some ideas. The glory you earn will be all yours.

But the life you save could be anybody's.

The Reckless Rescuer makes a Christmas Eve "save," but needs help from old friends to save his Christmas Eve.

The Clutcher of the Collective stared out the window at a leaden December sky. An occasional snowflake drifted down onto the ramp where the Huey waited.

Long Suffering Sam glanced up from his copy of THE MAC FLYER. "Relax, Boss. It's 1500 already—only three more hours of alert to go."

"Bah! Humbug!" C.R. snorted. "Three more hours of my valuable time wasted on alert. I've better things to do on a Christmas Eve, m'boy."

Sam smiled knowingly. "What you really mean is, you haven't picked up your Christmas tree yet."

"Sammy, that's not the half of it," the Ambient Aeronaut moaned. "I'm completely out of caviar, my bearskin rug is

still at the cleaners, and I've got to meet Tassels at the airport at seven. Maybe if we were flying I could get my mind off things, but there isn't a scramble in sight."

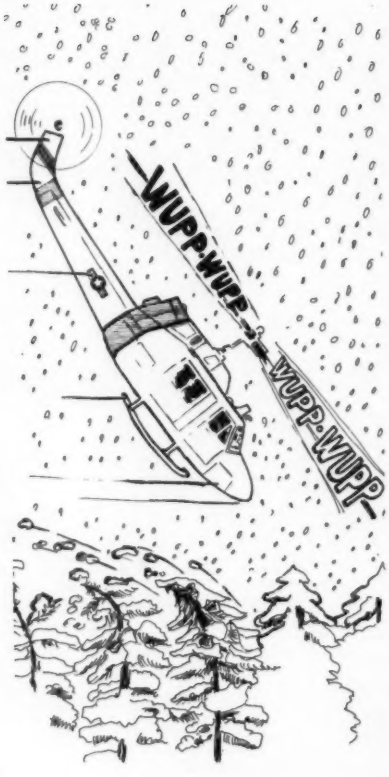
"Well, Sir," Sammy suggested, "we've got a maintenance request in the forms for an ops check of the auxiliary fuel transfer system. If you'd really rather be flying . . ."

C.R. brightened instantly. "Sammy, sometimes I think you may be aircraft commander material after all. Get on the horn and tell 'em we're gonna scramble our eggbeater for some Vee F 'n R local. Sergeant Torque! Make sure we've got a sharp crash axe. As long as we're boring holes, I might as well survey the neighboring vegetation for an appropriate specimen of Evergreenus Yuletidus." Slipping on his emerald green pigskin flying gloves, the Master Manipulator headed for the door.

•

"Save 11, Mountaingoat Tower."

"Tower, Save 11. Go ahead," Sam responded, hoping wistfully for a recall. Forty minutes of flying had already produced three whiteouts. The takeoffs were almost as bad, as the Field-Grade Fumbler's nose-low takeoff technique nearly turned the rotary-wing into a Roto-Rooter. Worst of all, the search still hadn't turned up a Christmas tree which met Terrorific specifications, and C.R. showed no signs of quitting until it did.



"Save 11, we've been asked to tell you that your relief crew are on their way out. Guess they decided to give you a break on Christmas Eve."

"Rog, Tower, and thanks," Sam replied happily. "Hey, Boss, didja hear that?"

"A sterling example of the Christmas spirit, m'boy. We shall return to the ramp posthaste." The Round One racked the Huey into a 70-degree bank toward the field as Sam hastened to get landing clearance.

In a few minutes they were back on the ramp, but C.R. didn't shut the aircraft down. "Well, m'lads, you two are cleared to depart," he commanded. "I'm going to, er, taxi over to the tacan checkpoint and, uh, check the tacan pointers."

"But, Boss —"

"Stifle yourself, Sammy," C.R. interrupted. "I know what the reg says, but I don't need any help for this job. Besides, your rug rats await. Now get out of here, and have a Merry Christmas by order of the aircraft commander."

"Well—all right, Sir," Sammy consented reluctantly. "Have a good Christmas Eve." He and Sergeant Torque hurried away across the frozen ramp.

But the Silver-Tongued Fox had no intention of checking anything but a likely looking grove of pines he'd spotted earlier. Moments after Sam and Sergeant Torque had disappeared from view, the Huey was headed west through the darkness.

The snow was falling harder now, but C.R. merely smiled and hummed a Christmas carol as the rotor blades dutifully beat the air into submission. The lights of the base disappeared as the Huey crossed a ridgeline and dropped down into a valley. The Rotund Rotorhead leaned forward, eyes straining to pierce the gloom.

Finally, his face brightened. "Aha! Undoubtedly, yonder grove contains the paragon of pines. A quick swipe of my trusty hatchet and I'll be off for hot spiced wine and fireside frolic." Thoughts of Tassels and a bearskin rug warmed the cockles of C.R.'s heart as he set up an approach to a small clearing.

Unfortunately, those thoughts proved a bit distracting; the landing turned out to be the Master Manipulator's fourth whiteout of the day. He applied his usual corrective action (Close Eyes, Hang On, and Pray). There was a mild thump and a yawing sensation. But as C.R. shut down the engine and the rotor blades coasted to a stop, it became apparent that neither the Huey nor its Pudgy Pilot had suffered any damage. His spirits restored, C.R. grabbed his crash axe and flashlight and trod off through the snow.

But the search proved more difficult than the Connoisseur of Conifers had expected. The first grove had yielded nothing, nor had the second. C.R.'s normally ruddy nose was turning a distinct purple as he turned back, hopefully toward the helicopter. He was dragging a rather disheveled spruce behind him; the pressure of time and impending frostbite had forced him to settle for whatever came to hand.

Suddenly, a hoarse shout broke the snowy silence. "Hey! Hey, you with the light! Hey!"

C.R. whirled, startled. As he turned the beam of the flashlight in the direction of the shout, he saw a man dressed in hunting clothes stumbling toward him. The hunter was obviously cold and exhausted.

"Thank God I've found somebody," he gasped. "We've been wandering in circles for hours."

"Steady, m'man," C.R. comforted. "It's Air Force Rescue to the rescue. My trusty flingwing will have you back to civilization in minutes."

"But my buddy! He's back that way with a broken ankle. We've got to get him out!"

"Tut, tut, m'boy," the Rotund Rescuer soothed. "All in a day's work for an experienced Aerospace Angel of Mercy such as myself. Lead on!"

•

By the time they finally found the injured man and loaded him into the aircraft, the Paunchus Pilot was beginning to have doubts about his own survival. But now he thought contentedly of the credit he would undoubtedly get for a save. And he would even have an excellent (and for once, true) explanation for Tassels, who by now had been waiting at the airport for an hour.

Snow swirled in the rotorwash as the Huey stumbled into the air. "Mountaingoat Approach, Save 11," C.R. transmitted jubilantly. "I'm on my way in with a recovery! Tell 'em to heat up some coffee for two very cold civilians. And how about a vector back to base? My tacan's a little shaky."

"Save 11, Mountaingoat Approach. Roger on the rescue; I'll pass the word. But I can't help out with a vector; our surveillance radar's out. Let me know when you get in closer, and I'll see what I can do."

"Ahh, rog, Approach." Well, C.R. thought, I know what heading I was on when I landed; a one-eighty from that ought to take me back to base. "Okay, Save 11 is heading back for homeplate Vee F 'n R. Start deckin' those halls!"

Unfortunately, the Aviator with Avoirdupois did not realize that the heading on which he had departed was 90 degrees from the one on which he had arrived, thanks to some inadvertent pedal input during the zero-zero landing. As the minutes dragged by, nothing came into view but more snowy treetops. The Great One's brow began to furrow even more deeply. The tacan steadfastly refused to lock on.

Suddenly, a row of bright lights burst into view as the Huey topped a ridge. C.R. stared at them for a few moments before he realized what looked odd about them. He was not looking at the lights of the Mountaingoat runway, but at a brilliantly illuminated gas station on Interstate 365!

He turned to the men in the cabin behind him. "Ahh, gen-

tlemen, if you'll bear with me, I have to make a short stop. There's, ah, something I have to take care of." They looked puzzled, but nodded, then grabbed for support as the Ace of Aerospace bounced the collective off the floor.

•

"Hey, Boss, this is Bobby out at the station. Look, I'm gonna call it quits and go home. What? Yeah, I know, but I can't take no more. You wouldn'ta believed it. I'm just sitting here minding my business and this helicopter lands in the parking lot . . . yeah, you heard me, a helicopter. Anyway, this fat little guy gets out of it, grabs a road map, hands me a buck, and takes off. What? Yeah, that's right, right down the freeway, maybe 20 feet in the air. I've had it. I'm goin' home before some dude shows up in a sled with a bunch of reindeer."

•

"Sarge, this is Purvis at the main gate. You're not gonna believe this, but we just lost the sign off the top of the guard shack. Yeah, the 'Mountain-goat' sign. How? It got blown off, that's how . . . I know there ain't no wind. It was this helicopter . . . no, Sarge, we haven't been into the egg-nog. I'm tellin' ya, he came roarin' over us so low you could count the rivets . . . no, it ain't stolen. He was comin' in, not goin' out."

•

Wearily, the Sheik of the Cyclic dragged his junior-grade Ponderosa toward the door of his condominium. His Christmas spirit was at an all-time low. The chewing-out he'd gotten from his Detco hadn't been that bad, and the fact that he'd gotten a save had kept him out of deeper trouble. Even having to pay for the sign didn't bother him that much. But now he was finally free to enjoy his Christmas Eve, and it was becoming painfully obvious that he'd have to do it alone.

He'd gotten to the airport to find that Tassels had departed some time ago with an unidentified young man. Badly shaken by this bit of information, he'd gone to Sammy's house and then to Sergeant Torque's; both were dark and silent. Even the Crazy Mule Saloon, his last hope in his rather desperate search for company, was closed.

With a sigh of resignation, he inserted the key and muttered, "Bah! Humbug!" Swinging the door open, he turned to bring in his Christmas tree, which he was now considering using for firewood. Behind him, the lights blazed suddenly bright and a chorus of voices burst into a carol. His jaw dropped open in amazement as he turned to see a room full of people.

Sammy and Sergeant Torque were there, complete with families. Tassels smiled as she held out a Terrorific 'Tini. And the regular gang from the Crazy Mule grinned as they put the finishing touches on a truly magnificent Christmas tree.

"Come on in, Boss," Sammy invited. "Tassels called me when you didn't show up, and I got worried. Anyway, we found out that you were on your way back with a save, and we decided to have a little surprise ready for you."

He looked closely at his Bulgy Boss, who seemed to be having a little trouble with his voice. "What's the matter, Sir?" he asked solicitiously. "Still a little chilly?"

"Ahh, er, no, m'boy," C.R. sniffed, "just a little something in my eye." Quickly regaining his accustomed composure he moved forward to join the festive throng.

"Well, now," he boomed in much stronger tones, "on with the festivities! Break out the caviar! After all, it's Christmas!" Taking a satisfied sip of his Terrorific 'Tini, he drew his long suffering copilot aside.

"Uh, Sammy m'boy, there's just one thing . . ."

"Yes, Sir?"

"Did you by any chance recover my bearskin rug from the cleaners?"

Quick Stoppers

Low-Pressure Mystery

Aircraft hydraulic systems usually either work or don't work. The crew of a T-39, seeing the hydraulic system warning light illuminated on climbout, assumed theirs wasn't working; low pressure indications on the hydraulic pressure gauges confirmed their suspicions. After waiting the period specified in the Dash One, they tried resetting the system. Loadmeter indications showed that the hydraulic pump was drawing current, but the pressure didn't increase. They turned the switch off, lowered the gear manually, and prepared for a landing using the emergency brakes.

But after descent to 5,000 feet, one more reset was tried—and this time the system came back to life. The landing was uneventful.

Back in the chocks, maintenance troops found a considerable amount of hydraulic fluid in the aft compartment and an unsecured cap on the hydraulic reservoir. Apparently, ambient pressure at lower altitude had been enough to keep fluid in the lines; but as atmospheric pressure decreased on climbout, the pump cavitated and hydraulic pressure was lost.

One Man, One Aileron

The Galaxy was on a PAR approach during a local training flight when the pilot in the left seat noticed a loss of right aileron response. He reported the problem to the IP, who made a controllability check—and found that his right control wheel produced no *left* aileron response. The scanner then reported that the right aileron was oscillating rapidly. Leaving the aircraft in the configuration established at the time, the crew made an immediate landing without further difficulty.

Maintenance inspection showed that an aileron valve malfunction had caused a momentary deflection of the right aileron in a direction opposite to control movement. This opposite deflection sheared both the forward and aft control quadrant interconnect shear pins, leaving the pilot and copilot in control of the left and right ailerons, respectively.

We presume the pilots were awarded an "A" for the day in crew coordination.

QS

Navigator's Lament

Everything seemed to be going normally as the two C-130's approached the drop zone. It was daylight, clear, and visibility of 15 miles. And with a surface wind of eight knots, the navigator knew he had it wired. Most certain to be a "P.I."

The navigator called the one-minute warning and all eyes in the cockpit were looking ahead at the rapidly approaching drop zone.

Meanwhile, back in the cargo compartment, the student loadmaster was at the ready, standing at the static line retriever rewind switch.

"Go to heading two-four-zero," the navigator directed.

Upon hearing the word "Go" the student loadmaster activated the switch before the instructor loadmaster could stop him. Exit two CDS pallets.

The strike report? Just 1,600 yards at six o'clock. That'll beef up the old CEA.

Ricocheting Wrenches

"Base Operations."

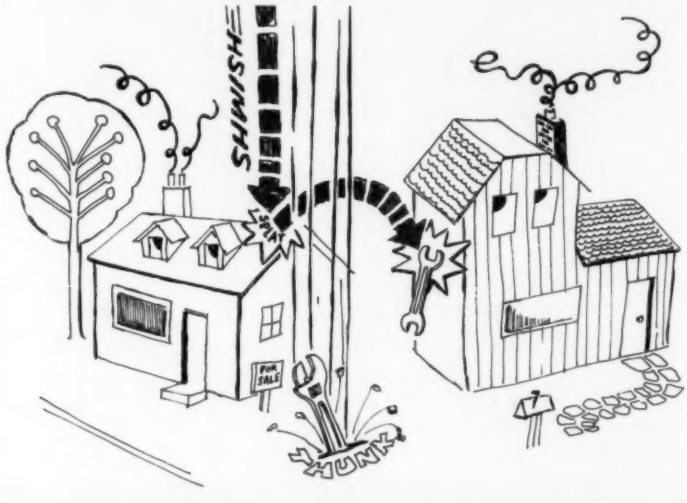
"Yes, I'd like to report that one of your large gray aircraft has dropped a wrench on my house."

That might have been the telephone conversation between a civilian living near the Air Force base and a base ops type.

It seems that a C-130 which had just completed several tactical training bundle drops was being positioned on initial for an overhead approach when the unscheduled airdrop occurred. Just prior to turning base, the aircraft commander directed the copilot to lower the gear. As the gear was going down, two wrenches fell from the front nose gear door. One wrench (a six-inch, open end) struck the side of a roof overhang of the civilian's residence and ricocheted to a neighboring house some 20 feet away. The second wrench (a six-inch crescent) was found imbedded in the lawn approximately 75 feet from the first strike report.

Investigators found that the tools had been left in the nose gear area by a maintenance person servicing the nose gear strut.

Though damage was slight in this incident, it doesn't take a lot of imagination to come up with a sad ending.



130 Ramp Freeze

It was the snowy season in Northern Europe, and the Herky had completed several shuttles in support of a winter exercise. After completing a normal cargo onload, the loading crew noticed damage to the lower leading edge of the aircraft ramp. No difficulties had been encountered during any of the previous on/offloads—so where had the damage come from?

Investigators concluded that, during the previous shuttles, water dripping from the cargo had drained into the pivot point between the cargo floor and the ramp and had subsequently frozen in flight. The accumulation eventually became great enough to cause the damage when the ramp was lowered.

Barrier Bites Two

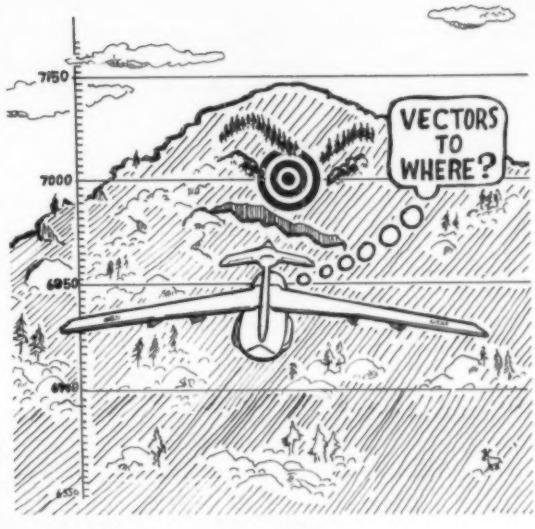
The pendant supports of a BAK-13 barrier at an overseas base had been changed, and the new supports were an inch wider and an inch greater in diameter than the old ones. Apparently the larger supports gave the barrier more "bounce," because during a ninety-minute period it snagged the bottom UHF antenna of a C-130 on takeoff and neatly clipped the number one VHF antenna from a landing C-141.

Driving a sexy, low-slung aerospace machine is nice, especially during baggage drills, but watch out for those bouncing barriers.

On a Clear Day

The Starlifter was receiving vectors for an approach to a base located in mountainous terrain; it was a clear afternoon with 35 miles visibility. The crew was maintaining an altitude of 7,000 feet and anticipating a turn to downwind when the controller acknowledged an emergency squawk from another aircraft. Continuing on their last assigned heading, the 141 crew realized that they were headed directly for a 7,133-foot peak; as the mountains drew uncomfortably near, the pilot initiated a turn to clear the terrain and asked if the controller planned to issue a turn soon. The controller responded immediately with instructions for a 90-degree turn.

What made the whole incident even scarier was the fact that the rugged terrain prompted both tacans to break lock. If the crew had been in IMC, only aircraft radar could have warned them of impending disaster.



after deadline . . .

C-130 STORIES, PHOTOS WANTED -- J. E. Dabney, a writer in Lockheed-Georgia Company's News Bureau, is writing a popular history of the Hercules and is appealing for leads on outstanding C-130 performances and personalities. Photographs are also sought.

Persons with information, leads, and anecdotes on the Herky Bird are asked to write Dabney at 3966 St. Clair Court, Atlanta, Georgia 30319, or to call him at 404-424-2701 (days) or 404-457-0815 (nights and weekends).

A RECENT T-39 GEAR-UP LANDING resulted in less than minor damage to the aircraft. The crew was unable to obtain a safe indication after exhausting all emergency procedures and, with less than 350 pounds of fuel remaining, they retracted the gear and greased the minijet onto the runway centerline. So little damage was done by the skillful emergency landing that the Sabreliner was flying again the next day.

NAVY OK'S CONTACTS -- The U.S. Navy has given its official blessing to aviators who want to wear contact lenses, but with some reservations. Since contact lenses change the shape of the cornea while they're being worn, uncorrected vision after the contacts are removed can be two to three times worse than it was before wearing the lenses. Although this is a temporary condition, naval aviators who elect to use contacts will have to carry at least one set of eyeglasses during flight; these glasses should be refracted to correct the temporary deterioration caused by the contacts.

Air Force has not announced any change in its no-contact policy for aircrew members.

AIR FORCE REVISES ITS SAFETY AWARDS REG -- Safety offices should be sure they have the newest AFR 900-26 -- it's dated 8 October 1976 -- when they prepare nominations for 1976 awards. Section F significantly changes requirements for the unit flight safety award.

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